

Story 977 (1961, Dictated)

Narrator: Neriman Hızır
(Ayş'abla), owner and
director of Ayş'abla
İlkokulu

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The ^{all}Fisherman and the ^{sel}Jinn

One day a fisherman was unsuccessful in his work. Although he cast his net many times during the day, he was able to catch nothing but a clay jug. The fisherman broke the seal and opened the jug in order to see what it contained. As soon as the jug was opened there came out of it what looked like a great cloud of smoke, but this cloud was not just ordinary smoke. It quickly took the shape of a huge jinn, a jinn as large as a giant.¹

As the fisherman was staring at the huge creature in amazement, the jinn said, "I shall now eat you!"

"But why?" asked the fisherman. "I save your life. Why should you wish to eat me after I helped you so much?"

¹According to legend, the race of jinns was captured and confined by King Solomon of Biblical fame. He was said to have sealed each jinn in a brass jar and cast it into the sea. Throughout the Middle East there are tales in which fishermen catch these jugs in their net, open them, and thus, unwittingly allow the jinns to escape.

Story 977

"He who sealed me inside the jug ordered me to devour the person who let me out of the jug. I have no choice but to eat you."

"All right," said the fisherman. "If you must eat me, then you must. I am very curious, however, about something. How could anyone as large as you ever be put into such a small jar?"

"Oh, that is very easy," said the jinn. "Watch how I do it." Saying this, the jinn began fitting himself, little by little, into the jug again

When the jinn was entirely back in the jug, the fisherman said, "Ah, now I see." As he said this, he quickly pressed the top back on the jug and resealed it. He then threw the jug back into the sea.